175 578 563 yet with Burma itself. Brought up as a complacent child of a government officer in Burma, this was the first time that I realized how we had unconsciously thought of England, the British Empire, as a permanent world force during our lifetime—a force with which we might bargain advantageously or without success, but one that our fathers and we had taken for granted for all the time that we could remember. But now we realized it as one power—leading perhaps—amongst other powers in the West, and we realized also the existence of Japan and remembered how the Burmans who visited it always brought back stories of the beauty, progress and good manners of the country.

We left our English friends in the first half of August 1940, as they waited, braced for an invasion, to go to what they and we considered a war-free country. I was in the Ladies Room of a big restaurant in London just before I left, when the attendant who watched me wrap my longyi asked me which country I came from. "Burma," I told her. "Burma," she repeated uncertainly. "Is there a war there, Miss?" "No," I said laughing, "but there is a Road there." Yet I was only amusing myself. As we set out home, the furthest that our thoughts of war and Burma ranged, was to wonder whether the Burma Road and the recent closing of it had made people think more about Japan and China than they had done in 1937, when the outbreak of war between the two countries had caused little excitement except that some of my friends became consistent boycotters of Japanese goods. We also wondered vaguely whether trade had been affected, and whether thought and general social conditions had been stimulated with the world-shattering event of a European war, not dreaming that this was but the splash of a pebble compared to the tempest that was to follow.

197. 36 633 772 Since I had left Burma, my mother and brother and sisters had settled themselves in Rangoon and I wondered how the city would seem after the big cities of the West. Rangoon is not one of the ancient cities of Burma. Its present position in the life of the country and people is a complete turnabout from its traditional place, for in days gone by it had attracted the inhabitants through spiritual rather than material renown. While Pagan, Ava, Toungoo and Mandalay rose and fell in political and commercial importance, Rangoon—Dagon as it was called—continued unchangingly a seat of pilgrimage, connected with fable and divinity, forming an actual link with another world cycle that existed in the universe before this present arrangement of Mount Myinmo, with its surrounding heavenly, earthly and hellish regions, was formed.

632 •773 For it was on the hill called Theinguttara, which now casts its shadow on the city of Rangoon with its crown of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, that he omens for the spiritual life of this world cycle were manifested, before

the last world was dissolved in chaos. On this hill five lotus buds sprang out of the earth; they opened into blossom, and from each flew a sacred bird which bore a sacred yellow robe towards the heavens. These five robes presaged the coming of five Buddhas who would guide the future world along the noble path to Nirvana. After this sign, that former world was destroyed; the present world followed, and the Buddhas appeared as foretold: Kaukathan, Gaunagong, Kathapa and Gautama, who successively attained enlightenment in this world, and whose statues now sit, each fifty feet tall and twenty feet broad, back to back in a great quadrate at the Kyaikpun Pagoda, calm and majestic as the grass grows about them and the rain washes down on their faces, awaiting the arrival of the fifth and last Buddha, after which this world cycle will be destroyed in a universal chaos. As each Buddha saw his enlightenment in this world he left a relic at the Theinguttara Hill, which had foretold his coming and which would now mark his attainment of wisdom—Kaukathan his staff, Gaunagon his water filter, Kathapa a portion of his robe, and Gautama his eight hairs which were enshrined in the first Shwe Dagon Pagoda after many perilous journeys.

But now the importance of Rangoon banishes all that into the realm of our dreams. The beginnings of trade date from about 1760 after King Alaungpaya had won a battle here and called the place *Yangon*: end of strife; but the big foreign port sprang up suddenly after 1852 when the British gained possession of it; the ships coming into its harbour from the oceans grew larger and larger, buildings followed the expanding commerce, roads and railways were built to all parts of Burma, foreigners crowded in and stamped its character, and by 1941 Rangoon had become a cosmopolitan city of over 500,000 inhabitants, more than three times larger than the next largest city in Burma and controlling over 80% of its export trade.

If the Burmese Empire of former days had been a sea-power, the development of Rangoon would not have been left to this late day, for its position makes it the obvious port for the whole country, and it had many natural beauties which would have made it a fair metropolis. Twenty-one miles up from the open sea, the Rangoon River gives a broad sweep to the left and allows a frontage of over two miles for ocean shipping to anchor. The river is a continuation of the Hlaing River flowing southwards from about 50 miles north of Rangoon and this, with the Pegu River and the Pazundaung Creek which join its waters opposite Rangoon from the right, made inland water transport also easy. The land giving on to the Rangoon River was open and flat for the layout of a fine city, with, further in, lakes and wooded hillocks, but just north of Rangoon the range of hills known as the Pegu Yomas stretched northwards for

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and ninepins, played with the big flat seeds of a jungle creeper. Pleasant they were under the shade of the great mango and pipul trees and the lofty cocoa-nut and palmyra palms, and exciting were the games, so that the customary stillness of the place was rudely broken upon by disputing voices, till a monk would come out and bring all back to work again as a penance. Then during the work there was the fun of the writing hour, when everybody had to write out maxims and prayers on his little parabaik with a clumsy pointed steatite pencil. There were always some stiff-fingered big pupils who could not manage to write their copy neatly or correctly, and as punishment had to take the good writers on their backs and march ruefully up and down the long schoolroom during pleasure. Sometimes they were thrashed, but the other punishment was the more dreaded. Then there was the schoolmaster monk, who would tell fairy stories of the other three great islands which lie in the sea round about Myinmo mountain; of the half-moon-faced western islanders, and the wondrous tree that bore everything eatable one could wish for and delivered it ready cooked; the joys of the six heavens of the Nats and the grisly horrors of Nga-yè, with its fearful ages of fantastic punishments. Every now and again travelling necromancers and hmaw sayās would spend a night or two at the monastery, and in recompense for the little delicacies and odds and ends of food which good-natured neophytes would get for them, used to tell stories of witchery and marvel. Sometimes there would be a sā-haw sayā, a kind of cyclic poet, who knew half the zats in the language by heart, and would recite a little just for practice. Or a tattooing sayā would come round and mark some particularly favoured youth with a quaint figure. Discussion as to its meaning and probable virtues would be carried on in the shadowy evenings for months afterwards. Varieties of this kind recur to the old Burman as he thinks of the school days long ago, and he sighs with as much conviction as any European that there are no days so happy as the school days.

English rule has disturbed old customs a good deal in the province, but even now we may say that, as an invari-

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585 369 with which he intends to set up house: a bundle of mats, a long arm-chair, a teak box, mattresses, pillows, besides materials for the feast and presents for the bride. The people who have put up the string — called the gold or silver cord—usually young men intent on a jollification of their own, stop the happy man, and threaten to break the string with a curse on the married couple unless some money is given them. It is simple extortion, and English district officers sometimes forbid it. Nevertheless the speculation is usually successful. I suppose no one feels very niggardly on his marriage day.

585 The other custom is much more singular, more ancient, and infinitely more disagreeable. On the night of the marriage a band of the young bachelors of the place come and shower stones and sticks on the roof of the house where the happy couple are, keeping up sometimes such a sustained battery that the thatch or wooden shingles suffer materially, while the furniture and even the newly-wedded couple occasionally do not escape injury. In Lower Burma the lads are usually bought off with a sum of money, and where the officials do not interfere to prevent it, the custom has degenerated into a system of extortion. Not a few lawsuits have sprung out of such sieges. The money paid in toll to this horseplay goes by the name of ké-bo, and is supposed to be devoted by the receivers to making offerings at the pagoda, but the young men nowadays use it shamelessly for their own entertainment. In Upper Burma the 585 114 blackmail is never demanded, and consequently Father San Germano was puzzled to conceive any reason for the extraordinary practice. Captain Forbes seeing the payment to procure relief, believed that extortion was the sole origin as well as object of the performance. But the learned in Burmese folk-lore assign it a much higher and more estimable 585 773 beginning. When, after the world was formed, it was first peopled from the superior heavens of the Byammās, of the nine that remained behind, weighed down by the gross earthly food they had eaten, five gradually became men and four women. When these Byammā-gyi ko-yauk, these nine great ancestors of the Burmese and of all mankind, had gradually degenerated, through the substitution of Pada-

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lata for the original flavoured earth, and of Thale rice for the leguminous creeper, desire arose among them, and four of the men took the four women to wife. The fifth man naturally resented being left compulsorily single, and pelted the happy couples with stones on their marriage night. Sympathy with the feelings of this archetypal bachelor has perpetuated the stone-throwing by the lu-byos down to the present day, and if there is no dearth of eligible spinsters in our times, the lonely bachelor may be allowed to express his envy of his friend's bliss without being accused of anything but gross cupidity.

After marriage the couple almost always live for two or three years in the house of the bride's parents, the son-in-law becoming one of the family and contributing to its support. Setting up a separate establishment, even in Rangoon, where the young husband is a clerk in an English office, is looked upon with disfavour as a piece of pride and ostentation. If the girl is an only daughter, she and her husband stay on till the old people die.

Polygamy is recognised and permitted, but practically does not exist now in British territory. A man with more than one wife becomes a subject of common talk, and a native official now living is well known all through the delta as the myo-ok with twenty wives. In native territory the right to have several wives was equally little used in practice. Many of the high officials who travelled about over large districts had wives in almost all the towns they visited —a custom in great measure induced by the rule which provided that the mayā-gyi, the chief wife, had to be left in Mandalay as a hostage for the fidelity of the official. But the great bulk of the people are, and always have been, monogamous. King Mindôn had fifty-three recognised *wives*, of whom thirty-seven survived him. His children numbered one hundred and ten, of whom upwards of fifty survived him. Besides the wives, like Solomon, he had numerous concubines. So, indeed, have many lesser people.

The forbidden degrees are few. Marriages with mother, daughter, sister, and half-sister, aunt, grandmother, and granddaughter, are forbidden, but none else. A son may marry his stepmother; it is expressly mentioned in the

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done in order to legally hand over a gift. As the water falls drop by drop on the ground, the pôngyis read out the formulæ, the substance of which is as follows: "Firm in my belief in the three precious things, the Lord, the Law, and the Assembly, I make this offering that I may be freed from all present and future miseries. May all creatures suffering torment in the four states of punishment reach the happy seats of nat-dêwas. May all my relatives, friends, and all men inhabiting this earth and the ten thousand worlds, share in the benefits of this meritorious work. O earth, and ye spirits, guardians of this place, bear me witness to the piety of this gift."

It is worthy of note that it is explicitly stated that the inward dispositions of the giver have nothing to do with the merit resulting from a good work. The merits are strictly proportioned to the degree of sanctity or perfection of him who receives the alms. Hence the glorious release which awaits an otherwise bad man who erects a pagoda.

Zedis are of many shapes and degrees of elaboration, but one common idea may be traced through them all. If you ask a Burman monk the cause of the variations in the form of the payā, he will tell you that the Buddha left no instructions regarding them in the holy books, but had only said that a small mound should be raised over his bones in the form of a heap of rice. Apart from the relation in which the payā stands to the Buddha himself as the representation of the holy one sunk in meditation, the ostensible object is the preservation of relics, and these are to be laid in a shrine, like the lotus-bud of which the zedi is typical, and later by an extending of the lines this got the form of a bell or spire. In the Malla Lingaya Wuttu we are told that the infant Buddha in the womb of Queen Maia resembled a lotus-bud, or a beautiful pagoda, and the conjunction of this idea with the simple original tumulus has undoubtedly led to the typical form as now seen in Burma. The names for various parts of the building all recall the idea of the flower-bud, with its young leaves folded in adoration. Thus the rounded swelling just below the slender spire is called the hnget-pyaw-bu, the banana palm-bud, and on the extreme summit

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Lower Burma

at the top of the hti is the seinbu, the diamond-bud, which in not a few poor districts is represented by a soda-water bottle, which combines the resemblance to a flower-bud with the good offices of a lightning conductor. The hnget-pyaw-bu is usually surrounded with lavish adornment of the sacred lotus. The payās that rise up into a plain cone or spire are therefore the nearest to the original tumulus, the top being simply drawn out into a conical point. On the other hand, the bell-like pagodas are only a direct imitation of the lotus-bud, and this has led to the more rounded dome-like forms, sometimes called thabeit hmauk, the inverted begging-pot. This term, however, is applied to the swelling-out round part on every pagoda, and has thence been borrowed to designate special shrines. It has nothing to do with phallic worship as some have imagined, nor is there any idea of the resemblance to a human skull. Such grim reminders of mortality common in Thibetan Buddhism do not commend themselves to the Burman.

The buildings are all made of crumbling, sun-dried brick, for it is enough to gratify the pious feeling of the moment, and even the long years that the most solidly built stone edifices might last would only be as an evanescent drop in the stream of eternity. Thus the Burman sees no harm in building pagodas of sand, or even cloth and pasteboard, and in the national annals the victory which false shrines won over more substantial erections is a favourite theme. In Lower Burma, the payās are mostly of the simplest pattern, derived from the archetypal rice-heap and the lotus-bud. They are solid pyramidal cones, rising with a gradually diminishing rounded outline, and surmounted by a hti, or "umbrella" spire, a construction resembling the musical instrument called a *chapeau chinois*, formed of concentric rings, lessening to a rod with a small vane called hnget-ma-nā on the top. They are almost without exception erected on more or less elevated platforms. Burma is quite different from other Buddhist countries, where the relics are exhibited on great feast days. The payā is perfectly solid with the exception of the tāpana taik, situated directly under the spire and the hti, and

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"The good that I have done in this world; all the alms that I have given [may they be for the benefit of] my parents, teachers, cousins, and all my relations; all who in Zampu-dipa are kings of the earth, all queens, their sons and daughters; nobles and all men of rank, officers, and all people of the earth in the thirty-one seats of the world. All the merits I have gained, may they be shared with these. I give them and share them freely. The alms are manifest. I have given them. This good work, when I forget it [*i.e.* in my next life], may it be counted to me in the time of the Buddha Arimadeya, when he is revealed. The friendly witnessing nats will bear testimony, as they wring the water from their streaming hair."

The allusion to the witnessing spirits refers to the Mathôndaye nats who testified that Shin Gautama was the true Buddha. Mān Nat, the spirit of evil, came and claimed the throne under the Bawdi-bin as his, and appealed to all his countless retinue as witnesses that he was the true Buddha, and the rightful possessor of the throne. They replied with a great shout. The Lord Buddha had no one to call in evidence but the earth, and to it he addressed himself. The earth replied with a violent quaking and a roar that scared away all Mān Nat's noisy host. The Mathôndaye nats stand as representatives of the earth, and it is to gain their testimony that a cup of water is always poured out whenever an offering is made. Hence their wet hair. At the Shwe Zigôn pagoda between Nyaung-u and Pagān, the Mathôndaye nats are represented under umbrellas and with books. Their images almost always display them wringing the water out of their long tresses. It is to draw the attention of these nats that the worshipper, after striking the pagoda bell, strikes the earth.

The small bell in the South Kensington Museum, in the case close by the larger one, bears the following inscription:—"In the month of Tabodwè [February], on the fifth of the waning moon, in the year 1204 [1842 A.D.], on a Sunday at about four in the afternoon, this bell was cast and moulded of pure copper. Its weight is 594,049 kyats [this is an absurd misstatement, or a gross piece of flattery to the king]. There are four lions on the hanging apparatus. Its height

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CHAPTER XXIV

A GRACIOUS PLOUGHING

LIKE the "royal elder brother" of China, the king of Burma ought to go out once a year to plough the fields. Thibaw Min did not do it during the first two years of his reign, and, as far as I am aware, was equally heedless throughout the later years also. The consequences ought to have been disastrous. According to tradition, the failure of the Lètwin mingala to come off should have caused a drought all over the country. But the Mo hkaung did not ensue; on the contrary, there was Mo kaung: an aspirate makes all the difference between a water-famine and seasonable showers. King Thibaw went very little indeed out of his palace. The annals of the country supply too many instances of kings, who, having gone abroad, found on their return to the palace gates that a usurper had taken possession of the throne in the meantime, and had no better greeting for his predecessor than a short shrift and a red velvet sack in which to plunge his body into the Irrawaddy. This unlovable custom had great weight with King Thibaw; but it was unwise of him to entirely abandon so venerable a tradition as the Lètwin mingala. It was at this ceremonial that one of the earliest marvels in the life of the Buddha Gautama happened. The king Thudawdana, with eight hundred noblemen save one, was ploughing the fields at the annual festival. Many country people came to see the great sight, and the city emptied itself. The maids who had charge of the little Prince Theidat laid him down under the shade of a tree and went to look on. The infant Buddha rose up as soon as they were gone, and sitting

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● 773 cross-legged in the fashion in which he is ordinarily represented in the images, became sunk in meditation. The careless maids all through the hot afternoon forgot about their princely charge, until the returning crowds and the setting sun reminded them of their neglect. Then they hurried to the tree and found that the Zampu tha-bye had maintained its shadow in the exact same position all day as it was in when Prince Theidat was first laid down. Notwithstanding the arc the sun had described, the shade had all along hung over the head of the meditating Payā Alaung.

241 796 643 The festival has therefore special reason to be celebrated by the descendants of the solar kings. It was also in every way a most picturesque fête, pleased the people, and offered a valuable opportunity for squeezing money out of them. King Mindôn never omitted it, even when he was grown old and portly, and little able to follow the slow-stepping bullocks. The ceremony took place in the beginning of June, about the time when the south-west monsoon usually breaks in Mandalay. The order went forth that the king would come out on such and such a day, and the people were enjoined to get ready. Not to see him—far from it. 643 349 The right of a cat to look at a king in Mandalay was not well established. The Amein-daw was issued in order that the heads over ten houses, the Sè-eing gaungs, might see that the road in their district was in proper repair, and that the yazamat had not got out of order. The yazamat, or king's fence, was a kind of lattice-paling put up in every street in the walled town, and in any of those in the suburbs through which the king was likely at any time to pass. It was formed of thick diagonal spars made into hurdles, which were lashed to heavy posts sunk in the ground at regular intervals. The whole was whitewashed, and often flower-pots stood on the top of the posts to enliven the structure a little; and it certainly wanted enlivening a good deal. The lattice-fence undoubtedly looked very neat and tidy, as a long straight road lined with Lombardy poplars does; but it became terribly tiresome, when you found all the streets looking exactly the same, with this six-foot-high heavy wood fence standing within a couple of feet or so of

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the two are smashing away at one another with their long hair streaming over their faces and down their shoulders. Friends join in, and almost before you can realise what has happened, the actors disappear, the women and children run off home, and the street is filled with an excited crowd of men swaying backwards and forwards, and fighting promiscuously. For this reason pwès are now never allowed in towns without permission from the civil authority, and numbers of policemen are always at hand to nip any riot in the bud. With the same object performances are only allowed in large towns about the time of the full moon, when there is abundance of light, in case the street lamps should be put out. The worst row of the kind I ever saw, however, was started by two of the Burman policemen themselves. They quarrelled about the merits of two apyodaws, talented *danseuses*, and the crowd, relishing the absurdity of the thing, backed up the quarrel with such energy that broken heads were plentiful and a ward in the infirmary was filled.

Foreigners very often make the mistake of taking the performances of children's companies to be actual zāt plays. Even Captain Forbes, usually so accurate, falls into this error in speaking of a representation of the Wethandaya zāt. This must simply have been a yein, an adaptation of the great drama for performance by the little choral dancers. For people who do not understand Burmese well—among whom, of course, the late Captain Forbes was certainly not to be included—the mistake is very easy. They are far prettier to look at, and much preferable in every way to the actual text of the birth-story, mainly because they are not so dismally drawn out, and can ordinarily be got through in an evening.

The dramas are all founded on the tales which Shin Gautama told of five hundred and ten of his previous existences, or on events in the lives of kings and heroes in India. None of them are original. The story in every instance is taken from the Hindoo, the adapter in most cases not even taking the trouble to nationalise the names of places and characters. It is only in the extemporising of the clown that anything really characteristic comes out. The Hindoo sense of humour is vastly inferior to the

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●773 Burmese. The term zāt or, still more so, wuttu (*i.e.* a real story) is properly applied only to the religious plays, the five hundred and ten Jatakas. The work of fiction not necessarily religious is called a Pyazat, an *acting* play. Thus you speak of the Utena Wuttu (given in part by Yule), but of the Zawta Gômma Pyazat.

Ten of the religious dramas stand out prominently from the others. These are called the Zatgyi Sèbwè, and are designed to show how the Lord Buddha in turn overcame all the deadly sins. They are named: (1) *Temi*, (2) *Zanecka*, (3) *Thuwunnashan*, (4) *Nemi*, (5) *Mahawthata*, (6) *Buyidat*, (7) *Sanda Gônima*, (8) *Nayidda*, (9) *Widuya*, and (10) *Wethandaya*. Several of them are very interesting. The *Wethandaya* is probably best known on account of the real pathos of the story and the beauty of the composition. It illustrates the boundless pity of a Budh. The prince—Gautama's last incarnation on earth previous to his appearance as Prince Siddartha or Theidat—gives away everything he possesses, even to his wife and children. The Nemi and Buyida zāts, or wuttus as they are called indifferently, are also very popular on account of the particulars they give of the nga-yè, the great hell, and the country of the nagās, fabulous creatures, like the kraken, that sleep deep down below, far beyond the ken of mortal man. The similarities between Norse mythology and Buddhist cosmogonies have often been noticed, and the legend of the kraken or nagā is not the least singular.

Of the other more secular plays, U Hpo Nya is the most celebrated recent author. He was killed in King Mindôn's reign by the Tabè Mintha, one of the most brutal of the royal princes, and for whose son's head King Thibaw twice
[662] paid a thousand rupees. The young man, however, lived long after King Thibaw himself had gone. His father's victim, U Hpo Nya, was particularly celebrated for the sweetness and melody of the songs introduced in his pieces, these songs, of course, being practically original. No one before or since is equal to him in this respect. The *Wizaya Zat* is probably his masterpiece, and forms one of the stock-in-trade of every company in the country. Maung Hpe, the son of a former wungyi, or minister of state in Mandalay, is

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Here or elsewhere,
With praise and prayer
I seek him for my guide.

Ah, still the Wut
Its baleful fruit
Doth bring before mine eyes.
See, bright and clear,
The Saddan mere
And round the mountains rise.

Like jangled chime,
Or tangled rhyme,
The piteous tale is told;
The Saddan Min[1]
By death solves sin
Committed once of old.

Thrice wretched she,
By destiny
Marked out the blow to guide;
She, then as Queen
Thubadda seen
Had erewhile been his bride.

But beauty's curse
Hath made her nurse
Greed most akin to hate;
The milk-white tusk
She sought to busk
With glories six her state.

Then her behest
She hath addressed
To Thawnôtto, the hind;
Fell hunter that,
As Dewadat
Hath felon deeds designed.

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[1] The Saddan Min is the Celestial White Elephant, an avatar of the Buddha Gautama. Hence it is that white elephants are so revered and regarded as the symbol of universal sovereignty. Thubadda had been the Saddan's queen in a previous existence. She repents, dies of sorrow, when she hears of the Lord White Elephant's end, and afterwards, in consequence, becomes a Yahanda in the time of the revealing of the Buddha. Mèbadda is the actual consort of the Saddan. She became, in after existence, Yathawdaya, the wife of Prince Theidat, before he left the palace and devoted himself to acquiring the Supreme Wisdom. Thawnôtto, the hunter, became the wicked Dewadat, cousin and brother-in-law of the Lord Buddha, and now languishes in Awidri, suffering punishment for his attempt on the life of Shin Gautama.

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O that curve in the round arm!
It has wrought men grievous harm.
Like the sylphs when they're at play,
Like the maids of Mandalay,
Without display
In everyday
Quiet dresses they
Are busked and gay
As the daughters of the palace, as the maidens of the skies
In their natural, their usual array.

O! could I but sing what I think,
My heart would no more on the brink
Of despairing love struggle and sink,
Ye maidens to heavens the link;
Each passer-by
Who casts his eye
Upon the buxom Hanthawaddy girls,
Though he be sage,
His feelings wage
Fierce war within his brain-pan till it whirls.

Dewa daughters, fair, fair,
Rosebud fairies, ware, ware,
Born men's hearts to snare, snare,
Can I paint your ways,
Better sound your praise,
In verse
That's terse
Than thus: You're fair as any maid in Mandalay.

Barani is a daughter of nats, corresponding very much to the classical Flora. [832]

Madi, the spouse of Prince Wethandaya, is always regarded as the model wife. [593]

Amè! "mother!" is the invariable exclamation of all Burmans on all possible occasions of astonishment, anger, doubt, or delight. [201]

The name Hanthawaddy, properly applied to the whole province, is, in songs, usually employed to designate Rangoon, for rhythmical more than any other reason, just as Mamye, or Mye, or Man stands for Mandalay. [195]

"Rosebud fairies," called bôngyo, are daughters of nats, who having stayed in the country of the dêwas for a thousand years, are obliged to come down to the seat of man again. 539 773

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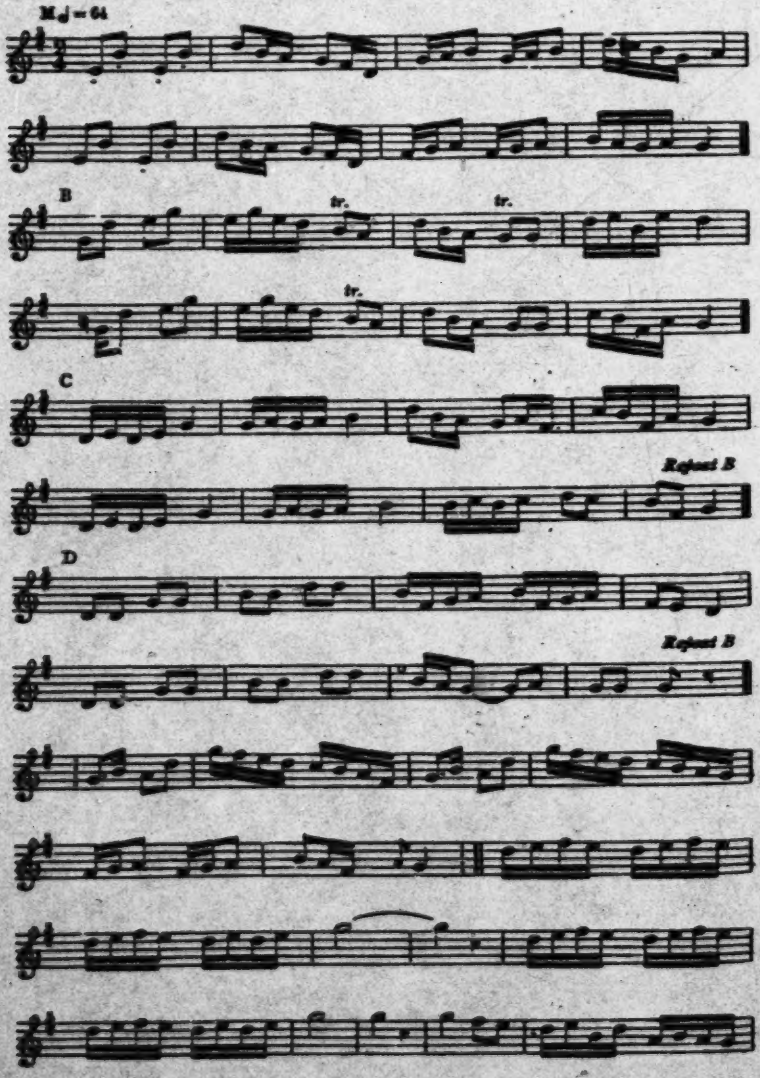
They are born from roses. Such charming houris apparently particularly affect Rangoon.

The following is the score as written down by Mr. St. Clair, now and for many years, editor of the *Singapore Free Press*:—

KAYA-THAN



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Love, the cloud-rack,
Flashed blue gleams of hope back,
Broke and furled its fringes black;
Here I wait
At thy gate;
Open straight,
Be not late,
Hot with hope I wait.

My pet is fair
With flowers twined in her hair,
Kerchief gold-meshed like a snare,
Like a net
Fairly set
Hearts to get,
Sweet my pet,
Mine lies in that net.

Courtly story
Tells of queenly glory:
My queen's as fair and more, aye.
Eyebrow tint,
Just a glint,
Slightest hint
Of art in 't,
Eyebrow's pencilled tint.

Painted cheeks sweet,
Nosegay where all scents meet,
See, I throw me at thy feet.
There is none
To be won,
No not one
'Neath the sun,
Like my love there's none.

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The thein-nats are certain spirits, or superior beings, who preside over the showers. It rains whenever they come out of their houses (the stars), to sport about and have mimic fights in the air. The thunder and the lightning are the clashing and shining of the celestial arms. When the sun is in the house of the goat it is very hot, and the thein-nats do not come out. To arouse them from their lethargy, if the rains are long of coming, it is a common custom in country places to have a lônswéthi, a tug-of-war. A chain or a stout cable is got, and the villagers divide themselves into two parties, and pull and shout and get up as much excite-

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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ment as possible, to stimulate the thein-nats to exert themselves also. A lônswèthi sometimes continues for nearly an hour without definite result.

The "painted cheeks," or "fragrant cheeks," so frequently mentioned in all these love-songs, refers to the thana'kha, a sweet-scented, straw-coloured powder made from the bark and roots of the *Murraya paniculata*, a flowering shrub of the citron species. Some girls, and especially some actresses, have particular recipes for making up the cosmetic into a moist paste. It is applied with the finger, and a good deal of skill is exhibited in putting on the requisite amount. Unpractised hands usually smear on far too much, and it is as unsightly as a badly whitewashed outhouse. On others it is barely visible. All girls use it, and not a few town dandies.

The following may be regarded as somewhat of an approach to the European *vers de société*. I have not attempted to imitate the original metre:—

THE CIGAR-MAIDEN OF MADEYA, NEAR MANDALAY

Thy cheroots, so deftly fingered,
Famous are in Burma's land,
Many a chief has fondly lingered,
Watched the maiden's nimble hand.

Madeya, I'd spare to sing thee
For cheroots and dainty maids,
For their crispness doth but bring thee
Sorrow from the palace blades.

By the throne's great gilded grandeur
Sits the prince, cheroot in hand,
And behind him little Ma Nyo,
Pearl of all the village band.

Burnt up all my love and sighing,
Like the ash of his cigar;
Hopes dispelled and idly flying,
Like the smoke he puffs afar.

Thy cheroots so deftly fingered,
Madeya are silver-white,
But the prince that came and lingered,
Stole away the hamlet's light.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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CHAPTER XXXII

THE TAWADEINTHA FEAST

796 NEXT to the uproarious merriment of the New Year's feast in the spring, the festival of Tawadeintha is probably the most joyous and striking of the Burmese religious ceremonies. It is not of universal observance. Some districts keep it up with much more pomp than others, but are not always equally enthusiastic every year in the way in which they celebrate it. In Rangoon and Mandalay, however, it is carried out regularly with greater or less magnificence, and preparations for the procession and the performance of the mystery play often go on for many months beforehand.

● 173 The feast commences on the first of the waning moon of Ta'saungmôn, about the beginning of November, and lasts over three days. It is commemorative of the Lord Buddha's ascent from the earth to preach the Sacred Law to his mother, Maya, then a Queen of dêwas in Tawadeintha, the second nat-heaven. He was staying at the time in the country of Thawatti (probably the place now called Fyzabad), in the Zetawun monastery, and thence in three steps compassed the distance to the nat-heaven, situated above the Myinmo Taung, the centre of the universe. He had just finished a display of miracles on an immense road, constructed by him from one side of the world to the other, before a crowd covering an area of thirty-six yuzanas. The leader of the heretics who challenged the display of wonders, a man named Purana, was so overcome with chagrin that he tied himself to a weighted jar and was drowned. Arrived in the nat-seat, the Buddha preached a sermon on the duties of filial gratitude, to a vast congregation of byammās, nat-

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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dêwas, and arahats, and having expounded the Law which was to lead them into the noble path of deliverance, descended again by a magnificent ladder composed in separate strips of gold, silver, and precious stones, to the ne'ban kyaung, where he received the usual pious offerings of the people on his arrival, on the day of the full moon of Thadingyut.

To recall this event in the Buddha's life is the object of the feast, and the preparation of the stage often takes considerably over a week, notwithstanding the facility with which bamboo buildings are run up in Burma. A platform is prepared, from twenty to fifty or sixty feet in height, according to the subscriptions and the scale on which it is intended to carry out the performance. Over this is raised a gaily-decorated pya-that, the tower-like spire with seven diminishing roofs, characteristic of sacred buildings, and leading up to it is a sloping way, representing the Saungdan, the path by which Shin Gautama ascended. Sometimes there is a similar sloping descent on the other side, figuring the ladder which led down to the monastery in the neighbourhood of Sampa Thanago, but more often the ascent and descent are compassed on the same slope, which comes to an abrupt end six or eight feet from the ground, on a level platform, covered by an ordinary roof, if it represents merely the earth, or the sacred pya-that if it does duty also for the ne'ban kyaung. Half-way up there is sometimes a covered stage, representing the Ugandaw hill, on which the Lord Buddha found purchase for his final step to the nat-dêwa country. On the first day of the feast, usually about eight o'clock at night, the whole scene being lighted up by the brilliant moon, occasionally rather spoilt by smoky torches and the evil-smelling fumes of open crude-oil lamps, the procession begins. The image of the Teacher of the Law, always represented sitting cross-legged, is mounted on a little carriage, fitted to run on a tramway reaching right up to the top, and is dragged up by means of a rope and a windlass. This is done slowly and in a rather jerky fashion, partly because the apparatus does not admit of greater expedition, but principally to prolong the function as much as possible, so that all the people may see it and greater merit may be gained. Surrounding the Buddha is a great company

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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CHAPTER XXXIII

A SÔNDAWGYI FEAST

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It is written that in the solitude of Uruwela a woman named Thuzata vowed an offering to the spirit of the place if she should have a male child. The prayer was granted, and the offering prepared. A thousand cows, new-calved, were milked; five hundred more were fed with this milk, and then with theirs two hundred and fifty more, and so on until the six noblest and best of all her herds produced a milk of surprising flavour and richness. This was boiled with sandal and fine spice in silver vessels, and fine ground rice, from chosen seed, set in new-broken ground, was added. Wonderful signs attended the preparation of the offering. A tha-gyā brought fuel to the fire; the great Brahma held an umbrella over the silver lota; four kings of nats sat by and watched; while subject spirits infused rich honey into the nogana. When it was ready Thuzata sent a servant to clear a place under a tree in the grove that she might make her offering to the wood-spirit. Sunama, the servant, found Shin Gautama sitting under the bawdi-tree. It was the day on which he attained the ne'ban of the passions, on which he became the Lord Buddha, and his face shone with a splendour beyond that of nats. Sunama returned and told her mistress that the spirit of the grove had appeared in person to receive the offering. Thuzata poured the nogana into a golden cup, worth a hundred thousand pieces of silver, such a cup as is always presented to the payalaung on the day wherein he becomes Buddha. Then she went to the grove, and prostrating herself humbly, made her offering, turned on the right, and retired. The Lord Buddha bathed

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 APl Burma
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in the river Neritzara, at a place where more than 100,000 Buddhas had bathed, before obtaining the supreme intelligence. Then he divided the nogana into forty-nine mouthfuls, ate it, and mounted the throne, whereon he sat for forty-nine days tasting no food, and combating Mān Nat, the spirit of death and sin. But ere he lapsed into meditation he threw his golden bowl into the river. It ascended the stream swiftly, floated steadily for a short time, and then sank in a whirlpool far down, leagues beyond the earth into the country of the nagās, where it fell against the golden bowls of the three previous Budhs with a clang that resounded throughout the four worlds, and all things worshipped the present Lord:

> King and high Conqueror! thine hour is come.
> This is the night the ages waited for.

This event in the life of Shin Gautama is commemorated in the Sôndawgyi pwè. Sônthi is a sacred word set apart to denote the eating of members of the Holy Assembly, and, in remembrance of Thuzata's historic offering, the mendicants are feasted annually by the pious, with a splendour and profusion far exceeding the ordinary alms poured daily with unstinting hand into the begging-bowl. The date of the feast does not exactly correspond with the original event. According to the chronicle, the Lord Buddha attained the first state of ne'ban in the month of Kasôn, about April, whereas the feast of Tawadeintha, with which the Sôndawgyi is always immediately connected, is celebrated after Lent, at the full moon of Ta'saung-môn in November. The festival is essentially one of the town rather than of the country. Except the New Year's Feast, none of the religious celebrations can be really called universal, and the Sôndawgyi perhaps least of all. Villages and small country towns cannot get together the splendour necessary to distinguish the occasion from the ordinary domestic feasts, or even from the daily almsgiving to the mendicants. It is therefore in a large town like Rangoon, where there is a certain amount of money, and a facility for acquiring or borrowing ornaments and frippery, that the festivities are best seen. There the *fête*—the word is more appropriate

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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only from the stranger's land, but so many miles through alien waters, and so it was necessary to seek for another place. Where could a better be found than the mighty Irrawaddy itself? Accordingly from then on till there ceased to be a king of Burma, the necessary amount was drawn from the centre of the river by the Ye-kyi-wun, a minister specially appointed for that purpose.

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As in so many other cases the amenities of the thi'gyan pwè have led to the extorting of money. In the good old days, and in the country districts still, it was the practice for benevolent people to keep open house, and give food and dainties to all passers-by, with tea and flavoured drinks, cheroots and betel for those that preferred them. To lighten the expense, contributions, called kèbo, were invited from friends and neighbours, and out of this has sprung the system of blackmail prevalent in Rangoon. A bevy of girls go into an Englishman's house and sprinkle him with lavender-water, or the moss-rose bouquet, so much in favour with Burmese belles. After a little badinage, they produce plain water, and threaten further operations unless something is given them. This they usually get, and if Englishmen complain of shameless extortion it is their own fault. The fair speculators are not such as any respectable girl would care to be seen with, and the prettinesses with scents are no more national than the scents are themselves. A provincial beauty would infinitely prefer a good honest ducking with vulgar water to the mawkish sentimentality of *eau de Cologne*. Some of the results of superior civilisation are very undesirable.

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On the final day of the feast a gun is fired at noon to signalise the ascent of the thi'gya min to his happy realms again, and then all is over. The squirts are laid by for another year; clothes are hung up to dry, and nothing remains but to wait and see whether the pônnas are more successful than usual in their prognostications for the year.

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The origin of the custom is no doubt the rain-making, described by Professor J. G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, but the Burmese explain it by a legend. The thi'gya min had a bet with a rival and the loser lost his head. This could not be allowed to be defiled by touching the ground, so it was caught by a daughter of Natdewas. Seven of them take it

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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in turn to hold the head, and when the head passes from one goddess to another the New Year begins. The head is burning hot, and has to be cooled with pouring on of water. This is recalled by the splashing of one's neighbour with water at the New Year time.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma(Hill Peoples)AP
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as the Burmese themselves. The Chins, the Karens, and, in some degree, even the stalwart if simple Shans, have all suffered in common with weaker nationalities from the cunning and braggadocio of the Burman. The Mahā Yaza-win delights no less in recounting tales of barbaric diplomacy than in heroics about gallant generals who hold quicksilver in their mouths and advance on the quailing foe, leaping eighteen or twenty cubits in the air. For example, the chronicles of Prome relate the well-known world-story of the bullock's hide of ground. A tribe came from the East under the command of an Amazon. She obtained from the aborigines—probably now some of the hill-tribes in Arakan—a grant of as much land as could be enclosed within an ox-hide, and, following the example of Dido, cut the hide into strips. She got into difficulties, however, and would probably have been driven out had she not married a neighbouring king. A stepson of hers founded the ancient town of Tharekettara (Prome), an event said to have been prophesied by the Buddha Gautama himself, in proof whereof the Shwesandaw pagoda exists to the present day.

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A story of a similar character is told with regard to the Shans. The Burmans had a quarrel with some of these big-boned highlandmen as to the ownership of a tract of fine paddy-land. The Shans were in force, and perfectly prepared to fight about the matter. The Burmese therefore resorted to craft. An old hermit was referred to on the subject. He said that the party which first finished building a pagoda of a certain fixed size should have the disputed territory. So both sides set to work. The Burmese soon found that the sturdy hillmen were distancing them. At night, therefore, the chief had recourse to stratagem. He made a framework of bamboos of the required height, had it covered with cloth, and daubed the cloth with white plaster. When daylight came, and the Shans saw the Burmese shrine complete and perfect, even to the extent of offerings of fruit and candles, their astonishment and dismay were such that they marched off straightway to the hills—ascribing the rapid erection to supernatural assistance, and never dreaming of examining the precocious payā; whereat the Burmese chronicler chuckles with patriotic delight, and glorifies the

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shrewdness of his countrymen. The same story is told of the foundation of the Arakan empire by the younger of two brothers who came from India.

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But it is in the relations with the milder-natured tribes, such as the Karens and Chins, or the small if warlike septs such as the Kachins, that the Burman most comes up to the truculence of the Mahā Yazawin. Out of the northern Kachins—bold robber bands, armed with queer, home-made, stockless guns—little was to be gained. They lived on the hills, and owned nothing but pigs; but they raided on low-land villages, and the Burmans retaliated, and there were periodic seasons of mutual crucifixion. Long ago these clans had the reputation of kindly hospitality, but Burmese tyranny made most of them dangerous savages. It is different with the Karens and Chins. The former, a heavy, plethoric people, endure their wrongs with dull indifference, all but the fierce Red Karens, who kept up a perpetual guerilla warfare, after the manner of the Kachins. The Karens account for their wrongs in the following way. When Yŭwa created the world he took three handfuls of earth and threw them round about him. From one sprang the Burmans, from another the Karens, and from the third the Kalās, the foreigners. The Karens were very talkative and made more noise than all the others, and so the Creator believed that there were too many of them, and he threw another half handful to the Burmans, who thus gained such a supremacy that they soon overcame the Karens, and have oppressed them ever since.

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The Chins were subjected to such long-continued and systematic ill-treatment on the part of the Burmese, that traditions accounting for this oppression actually form a part of the national religion. All mankind, they say, is descended from a woman called Hlinyu, who laid 101 eggs, from the last laid of which sprang the Chins. Hlinyu loved the youngest best; but he had gone away, and before she found him again the whole world except bleak mountain-ranges had been partitioned out among her other children. So the Chin first man got the hills, and as compensation was given elephants, horses, cattle, goats, pigs, and fowls. Unfortunately, Hlinyu appointed the Burman brother to

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look after him. The Burman turned out a most wicked and unscrupulous guardian. He pretended to teach him, but only showed the blank side of the slate, so that the poor Chin never learned a single letter. He rubbed the elephant's back with cowhage, so that the Chin's bare legs were so tickled that he refused to have such an unpleasant animal, and gave all the elephants to the Burman. By similar tricks the buffaloes, the horses, and the cattle were obtained. When the Chin mounted to ride on the horse, the Burman's wife got in the way, and was knocked down; and as compensation for the injuries she sustained, and to quiet her clamour, the horse had to be handed over. Then at the Burman's instigation the Chin went to view his buffaloes, clad in fiery-red garments. The buffalo naturally chased him up a tree, and before he could gain the earth again the buffaloes had gone the way of the elephants and horses. Ultimately nothing remained but goats, pigs, and fowls. Even the barren mountains were not left in his undisturbed possession. When the boundaries of the different countries were marked out, the Burman took very good care to mark his with stones and pillars, but he persuaded the Chin that tufts of grass were good enough for him. These were all burned away by the jungle-fires, and then the despoiled Chin had to live wherever the Burman told him. Thus the race has never had a country or town of its own, but wanders about in a nomadic way over the hills on the fringe of Burma. The well-known custom some of the frontier Chin women have of tattooing their faces is an existing proof of this tyranny. They are naturally pretty; and this disfigurement—for they themselves acknowledge it to be such, and never adopted it in the heart of the Chin hills—was adopted to prevent the Burmese from carrying them off, as they once did constantly.

The stories of the Mahā Yazawin fully account for and justify these queer traditions of the national religion of the Chins. But it is not in such minor points that the annalist is seen at his best. It is when he vapours about Chinese and Siamese and Munipuris, who come in armies numbered by hundreds of thousands, with elephants in tens of thousands, and the guardian nats of the nations fight on their respective

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 APl Burma
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sides and serve to account for Burmese retreats—then it is that the spirit of the Mahā Yazawin comes out and streams along in true 'Ercles vein. And except the plays the Burman has no other literature to read. It is not wonderful, therefore, that he has as good an opinion of himself as the "centennial Yankees."

> Breathes there a Yank, so mean, so small,
> Who never says, "Wal now, by Gaul,
> I reckon since old Adam's fall
> There's never growed on this 'ere ball
> A nation so all-fired tall
> As we centennial Yankees.'

The writer might well have been a worker on the Great Chronicle of Kings.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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CHAPTER XLVII

THE LORD OF THE CELESTIAL ELEPHANT AND OF MANY WHITE ELEPHANTS

773 175 643 THE *Royal History of Kings* enumerates altogether 587,000 kings, following one another in regular succession. From Mahā Thamada, the great first ruler of land and of sea, there were 334,569 sovereigns till the time of the most excellent Buddha Gautama. From thence onward, the Mahā Yazawin carefully records the sequence of the predecessors of the last ruler of the Eastern Land, Thibaw Min. Western chroniclers point out incredulously that the hunter Aung Zaya, who died in 1760, founded the present dynasty under the title of Alaungpaya (commonly written Alompra), and till his rescue of the country from the victorious Peguans, held no more exalted rank than that of headman of his native village. But this scepticism ignores the doctrine of Kan, which provides that none can succeed to the throne of the Arbiter of Existence and Great Lord of Righteousness but those whose merit in previous existences entitles them to it.

643 The king emphatically rules by what is called in the Western kingdoms the right divine. The eldest daughter of the reigning king was always declared tabindaing, she was forbidden to marry till the death of the sovereign. When that occurred, if there were no sons to succeed, there was an interregnum till the tabindaing could find a husband to ascend the throne. This selection was not made by the laws of passion or personal inclination, but was solely decided according to the principles of kan. A royal chariot was harnessed to a fiery steed and driven away from the palace with no one to guide it. The horse roamed about,

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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643 the peacock and the hare, typifying the descent of the king from the solar and lunar races, which was also directly laid claim to in the title, netwetbuyin, sovereign of the rising sun. Similarly with the titles khattia, implying that he had dominion over the crops, and yaza, because he could instruct men in the laws, a somewhat doubtful ability in regard to all except perhaps King Mindôn. The consecration by beittheit was completed in three special ceremonies, as was the case with the Payālaung chosen to be the first ruler.

1. Yaza-beit, the consecrating of him as king.

2. Manda beittheit, the solemn marrying him to a queen of royal lineage.

3. Thenga beittheit, the confirmation or renewal of his engagement to abide by the laws, whereupon full powers for the government and administration of the country are conferred.

643 773 177 793 The actual coronation ceremony was latterly a mere form, but was intended to mark the claim of the Lord of the Golden Palace to be the representative of the universal monarch, the Sekyawadé king, who never makes his appearance during the time allotted to the publication and duration of the religious institutions of a Buddha. It consisted principally in incantations and sprinkling with holy water from the Ganges, performed by the pônnas, the Brahmin astrologers; the Burman yahans had nothing whatever to do with it. Besides the pônnas, only a few of the chief ministers were present. The really national part of the ceremony was the royal progress round the city moat, made seven days after the beittheit. The king left 643 175 the city by the Eastern Gate, the precise moment being notified by a discharge of cannon. He then entered the state barge, a most gorgeously gilt and carved construction, surpassing even the traditional coach of the Lord Mayor of London. This boat was then slowly rowed round the moat, with music clashing all around, and bands of dancers supplying the place of a rejoicing populace. Then when the circuit had been completed, the newly crowned monarch entered again between the guardian ogres of the Eastern Gate, a fresh salvo of artillery announcing the arrival at the palace. The ceremony was simple enough, but King

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Thibaw never went through it. In the first days of his reign he was afraid to leave the nandaw, lest conspirators might find the chance too good a one to lose, and later on, a fear that the delayed festival might suggest ideas of previous faint-heartedness came in the way. Consequently, though he was crowned successor to Mahā Thamada as far as the beittheit was concerned, and therefore became the source of the law, the guardian of the welfare of the country, the recipient of the revenues, and the chief administrator of justice, he was no proper successor to the warlike Alaungpaya. Possibly the failure to assume the sturdy spirit of the first of the family may account for the deficiency in some of the attributes derived from the first king, a deficiency which even the most loyal of his subjects did not hesitate to admit.

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The first ruler was chosen for his strict adherence to the five fundamental precepts now incumbent on all men, and for his general sanctity. These qualities are inherent in all successors, though sometimes it is difficult to distinguish them. From them sprang four other laws incumbent on all kings and rulers. These thengaha, kingly laws, or byammazoya are as follows:—

1. Thathameda, ordaining that he shall not receive more than a tithe of the produce of the country.

2. Purithameda, ordaining that the king shall engage to pay his servants and army once every six months.

3. Thamapatha, by which the king binds himself to assist his subjects with money, and to receive payment of it within three years, without charging interest.

4. Wāsapaya, the use of courteous and fitting language, according to the age and position in life of the persons addressed.

It is to be feared that these kindly kingly laws were not found suitable to the conditions of modern society. At any rate they were not very strictly observed by Thibaw Min.

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Nevertheless that monarch was very far from being such an unlovely character as most Europeans have been led to believe. It was explicitly denied by many that he drank at all; it is certain that whatever excesses he may have plunged

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CHAPTER LII

THE LORD WHITE ELEPHANT

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THE importance attached to the possession of a white elephant is traceable to the Buddhist system. The form in which Gautama Buddha entered the womb of Queen Maya to be born upon earth for the last time to "teach the Law and give the millions peace" was that of a white elephant. The Saddan, or celestial elephant, was an avatar of his many existences previously. The Saddan is gifted with special endowments, and is one of the seven precious things the possession of which marks the Sekyawadé, the Mahā Chakra Vartti Raja, "the great wheel-turning king," the holy and universal sovereign—a ruler who appears in once a cycle, at the time when the waxing and waning term of human life has reached its maximum of an athinkaya (a huge period represented by a unit and 164 cyphers) in duration. Thus the possession of an undoubted white elephant stands as a sign and symbol of universal sovereignty; and every Burmese king longed for the capture of such a treasure during his reign as a token that his legitimate royalty is recognised by the unseen powers. The great river of Burma, the Irrawaddy, is named from Airawata, the elephant of Indra, a sufficient assertion of the proper dwelling-place of all his successors. Hence the reverence of the Hindoos for the animal, and their not infrequent pilgrimages to Mandalay to see the royal creature and have a dursun, or interview of worship, with him.

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All the elephants in the country, whether wild or tame, belonged to the king: whoever captured one had to give him up to the king, and he granted permission to the princes and to a few of the higher dignitaries to use them. The

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

immediate superior a certain fixed sum, determined without regard to favourable seasons, health of the population, or anything of that kind, and as each man was judge over the people in his charge, it may naturally be supposed that the general population did not lead a very happy life. Complaints might be made against extortion and illegal decisions, but the heads of tracts, if they had the money, could always stifle inquiry.

Some of the laws deduced from Manu's eighteen original enactments strike one as being rather singular. For example, if two men quarrel and fight and one of them is killed, there is no penalty; but if a third party interferes and kills or injures one of the original combatants, he must pay the ordinary fine for murder, or causing hurt. Should he himself be killed, the other two are subject to no penalty. When a man is guilty of adultery with another man's wife, if it be proved to be the first time, he must pay the fine for adultery, usually the price of the woman, assessed according to the judge's opinion; if it is her second offence, he only pays half the fine; but if she has been guilty for a third time, he pays no penalty at all.

If one man curses another and some evil happens, he must pay twice the price of the damage incurred; thus, if the man dies he must pay twice the value of a man; two cows if a cow dies, and so on.

When the king dies there is a general pardon of all offences, and a remission of fines, except in the case of debt. There are also seven things which cannot be reclaimed after the death of the king under whom they were promised or given. These are:—1. Deposits. 2. Pledges. 3. Money paid wrongly by the parties in a law-suit. 4. Things carried off by violence, or seized upon without sufficient title. 5. Promises. 6. Things secretly stolen. 7. Things that have been voluntarily given up by one man and taken possession of by another.

The decisions of Mahawthata, Princess Thudhammasari, and others are of little value from a strictly legal point of view. They are chiefly of a religious character. The princess begins by saying that her cases are to be considered as guides to nobles and judges as to the line they

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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671 should follow. To an English barrister they would seem to
773 be excerpts from the *Arabian Nights*, and as far from precedents as it is possible to imagine anything. The play of Mahawthata tells of the Lord Buddha in the birth in which he exhibited the most consummate wisdom and acumen, as in Wethandaya he embodies the spirit of liberality. In both these births, as in his last, Shin Gautama spoke from the moment he was brought forth. As Wethandaya he immediately entreated his mother for something to give in charity to the poor, and distributed forthwith the four hundred pieces of silver she gave him. As Mahawthata he appeared in the world with a plant in his hand, and, holding it up, said, "This is medicinal herb." Throughout all this life he was constantly displaying extraordinary wisdom, jealous ministers being in the habit of propounding difficult cases to him. Thus he was shown a log of sha (*Acacia Catechu*), from which cutch, stupidly called *Terra Japonica*, is obtained, and asked which was the upper end and which the lower end. He solved the problem by putting it in the water, when the lower end, as being the heavier, sank deeper in the water. Another case is exactly similar to the famous Biblical decisions of Solomon. These decisions, though they may be interesting, are hardly valuable as standard leading cases.

673 Some of the definitions of crimes in the Dhammathat are a little singular. Thus among the ten descriptions of assault are mentioned: "saying in regard to a lunatic, a drunkard, or a half-witted person who is ill, that he will die, and he dies"; "refusing restitution for cattle killed"; "standing near an assailant." To avoid being summoned for one of the twenty-seven kinds of abuse one must be very circumspect, for there is ground for action if one says Hé to a man, as the Mandalay people were fond of shouting Hé Kalā after Europeans. It is equally risky to address a man as nin, *i.e.* in the third person; to say that he is "deficient in strength"; that he is a stutterer, bow-legged, broken-down, squinting, or afflicted with white spots on his body; that he is heretical, or, finally, that he is given to using bad language.

671 The niceties of the law may be illustrated by the following case from the Talaing Dhammathat. A man in search

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER LVII

LAND TENURE

IN India the Raja has always been considered the chief proprietor of the soil and the lord paramount over all those who own it or dwell upon it. In Burma precisely the reverse of this system obtained. The king was indeed considered entitled to a share of the produce, and, as a matter of fact, undoubtedly got pretty nearly all of it; but the origin of the land tenure rested on an entirely different foundation. The Burmans go back to the first peopling of the earth and the appointment of the saintly Payālaung to be ruler over them. Mahā Thamada came after the lands had been pretty generally taken up by the people, and therefore the cultivators of the original thalé san had no intention of appointing him supreme landlord, when they chose him to be the source of the Law and of the administration of justice. He acquired a share of the produce of the country only by the free gift of the people, who, to provide revenues for him, of their own accord surrendered a tenth part of all their crops that he might be free to devote himself entirely to the management of the public affairs and the execution of the laws. This right to a tenth of the produce of the soil, and no more, is explicitly laid down in the Indian Buddhist code, the Dhammathat, or laws of Manu. This ancient book, which, by the way, is entirely distinct from the Indian *Institutes of Manu*, enunciates as follows in the sixth chapter: "The king, who is our ruler, must abide by the ten kingly laws. All land which is unclaimed shall be his, but he shall have no right to take all. Such lands as are cultivated by man, or have been previously reclaimed, shall

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2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

the right of land tenure should always have been so fixed and certain. The fondness with which the people cling to their ancestral lands has something of almost religious fervour in its tenacity. As long as a family remains in the neighbourhood of their inheritance nothing will persuade them to give up their connection with it. In Upper Burma, to the present day, land is never sold as the term would be understood in Europe. The transaction which goes by the name of a sale is, in reality, a kind of mortgaging, or, more exactly, pawning, if such a term can be used with regard to land.

The estate passes from one occupant to another for a certain sum of money, and it is clearly understood that if at any time the original owner is in a position to reclaim his property he may do so whether the purchaser likes it or not. Farther than this even, the buyer cannot sell the land to a third party without first obtaining the consent of its former owner. Notwithstanding this feeling, however, it is seldom that a property can be found which has remained for any considerable length of time in the same family. This is owing to the constant rebellions and wars between Peguans and Burmese and Shans, which afflicted the country for five hundred years. All those who were not killed were driven away from their former homes by ruthless invaders or were drafted off to fight for the king. In the short intervals of peace rival governors, in desperation for means to raise the revenues expected from their provinces, would tempt people away from their former homes by the offer of rewards or a reduction of body service. Thus in some cases the proprietors were killed out, in others they left for districts so remote that it was impossible to retain a hold on the ancestral property, however great their attachment to it. As an illustration of the sanctity attaching to ownership of land, the law concerning church lands may be quoted from Buddhaghosha's Parables: "Whoso shall take for himself or for another wutmye, consecrated or glebe-land, shall become a mite, or a white ant upon that sacred ground for the whole of 100,000 cycles."

The eighteenth of the original eighteen laws given by Manu to the king refers to the partition of property, and an elaboration of this points out sixteen descriptions of children who cannot claim a portion of their parents' property. The

114 very considerable the labour must have been. Experts in western
533 notation who may be disposed to smile at the *Burmese Music Notes* will realise notwithstanding that here at last are the authentic classical tunes of the Burmese put on record in black and white, ready, and if desired, easy enough to be transcribed into western notation after a perusal of this article and its supplement 'The writing of Burmese music.'

534 In the second book of U San Win is appended most valuable
114 and authentic information on the fundamentals of Burmese music, such as, the tuning of the Burmese harp (စောင်းတော်), its history; the tuning of the drum-circle (ဆိုင်းဆိုင်း); the gong-circle (ကြိုးဝိုင်းဆိုင်း); the ခ *Hnè* (Burmese oboe), big and small; and the succession of Burmese keys. The word 'key' will arouse sudden interest. It will become very interesting indeed in due course. To begin with the classics:—

533 "*Preface*:—From the beginning of the world, during the sovereignty of the
773 first President King the five principal sounds of bass, string, percussion, wind and clapper, had been employed in music in ceremonies of sprinkling the holy water all over the world.

"Three hundred years before Buddha's Enlightenment, when, to avoid the enmity of Pañcala Rājā, the Sakya kings of Kapilavatthu, Devadaha and Koliya left the middle regions (Majjhimadesa) and founded the Tagaung kingdom of Sankassarattha, the same five kinds of instruments were wont to supply music for auspicious Royal occasions and entertainments.

"Also, during the life-time of Lord Buddha, according to *Sakkapañha Sutta*, deva Pañcasikhā, the wearer of five top-knots, renowned the Lord in song playing the seven times seven (49) melodic figures of *Vi.ita pluta* on his celestial harp, which was said to be three-quarters of a *yojanā* (*i.e.*, about 2¾ miles)[1] in length, called Beluvā-pañdu-vinā.

"The Buddhist anchorite Nārada of the middle regions compiled the treatise *Naradasikhā* from musicology as known to all learned ones from the beginning. In it was mentioned the same seven times seven (49) melodic figures (*tāna*) and three times seven (21) modes (*mucchanā*) which are mentioned in *Sakkapañha Sutta*.

"In the chronicle of Buddha are descriptions of how, when he was seated on the invincible throne Aparājita the devas came and paid homage with musical instruments; and how, on the occasion of His departure from their abode, Tāvatimsa to visit Sankassa Nagara, they followed in His wake proclaiming His excellence in music and song.

"After the death of Lord Buddha, too, in the history of the middle regions, the Buddhist nobility and gentry practised music on various instruments, classifying and utilising various kinds of sounds.

"In the history of our Buddhist country of Burma, music and musical instruments existed throughout the successive kingdoms of Tagaung, Srikhettara, Pagan, Myinsaing, Sagaing, Pinya, Ava, Konbaung, Amarapūra, down to Ratnapūra Mandalay.

1. Authorities differ on the exact measurement of *Yojanā*.

13: Khin Zaw I-5 (no date) 1940 API Burma
Burmese AP4

BURMESE MUSIC.

"Among all the kings of Burma, there was one King Thālun, during whose reign (1629-1648 A.D.) Minister U Aye compiled a treatise on Burmese music called *Naralèkha*[1] နာရဲလေခ in which were included the 37 ritual songs. Later, in the reign of Bodawpaya (1782-1819 A.D.) this treatise was revised and enlarged by Myawadiwungyi U Sa. It was known to be printed in the royal press within the city in Mandalay. Apart from this no other Burmese work on Burmese music has been known to exist for all the fifty years and more after the British annexation (1885 A.D.).

"Because of this paucity of printed record, it was thought that music existed only in western countries and not in Burma. Not so. There is evidence in Buddhist literature that music has flourished in this country for a long time. Unfortunately, the theory and practice of music have not been put into writing. Instead, they were handed down from father to son by word of mouth and by hand-on-hand instruction, so that, human memory was the only repository of Burmese music.....

"*Appendix—cide* Abhidhāma Nissaya: The music which Pañcasikhā (the wearer of five top-knots) made on his three-quarter-*yojana* long celestial harp Bheluva is composed of 7 (ground tones) *Soara*, 3 *Grāmas*, 21 *Mūrchanas* and 49 *tānas*, the total effect of which is known as *Sramaṇḍala*.

"Bulls produce the Uasbha tone; horses, the Dhevata; peacocks, the Çadya; goats, Gandhāra; cranes, Majjhima; cuckoos Pañcama; and elephants Nisāda.

Grāmas are three: Çadya, Majjhima and Sādhārana.

Therefore the above scale of seven tones played in three different positions, raised, lowered, or natural, produces the 21 varieties of sounds, which according to U Ba Choe in ဩဝ်ဗန္ဓ(ဂု)ဝါးဩဇြင်း is the reason why twenty one is the number of drums in a drum-circle ဗိုင်းဗိုင်း, gongs in a gong-circle ဂြိုးဇးဝန်ဗိုင်း and pieces of bamboo or iron in the ပတ္တလား *pattalar* the Burmese relative of the xylophone or the glockenspiel.

The above classical terms are explained authoritatively by Fox Strangways[2]:

GRĀMA (ဂါမ) the name has been applied specifically only to three scales—the Sa-grāma, our major with a sharpened Sixth; Ma-grāma, *our major C-c, but intended presumably to be used as an F-f scale*[3] with a sharpened Sixth; and the Ga-grāma, possibly intermediate between the two, long obsolete.

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1. None of the works on music mentioned are available nowadays. U San Win has seen *Naralèkha* နာရဲလေခ in parabeik form and informed me that he would try to trace the whereabouts of the present owner in response to my suggestion that this valuable document should find its final resting place in the University Library. In an article on the 7 tones ဩဝ်ဗန္ဓ(ဂု)ဝါးဩဇြင်း in စာပေဗိမာန် Vol. 1, No. 3, 1936, U Ba Choe mentioned two more works *Nāṭyaśastra* နာဋ္ယသာသ္တြ and *Maṅgalika* မင်္ဂလိက of which only the former, a Sanskrit classic attributed to Bharata, is mentioned in the list of Sanskrit works on music in Fox Strangways' *Music of Hindostan*.

2. *Music of Hindostan*, p. 106 *et seq*. It should be noted however that these terms, in spite of their Burmese annexation, apply, so far as Fox Strangways is concerned, to the music of Hindostan.

3. The italics are mine. This statement seems to apply to the Burmese scale of *Hnyindaw* ဖွဲ့ဆိုးသံ C-c, which has puzzled me for a long time because that class of songs ဖြဲ့ဆိုးသံဖွဲ့ချီ *Kyok, Bwè Thachingan*, which I am sure have F as their tonic, are said to be played in the C-c scale. These words made me feel less puzzled. However, there are more puzzles to come concerning the Burmese scale.

533 VĀDI, SAMVĀDI, ANUVĀDI and VIVĀDI (Translated 'sonant' 'consonant' 'assonant' 'dissonant') are survivals of a theory of consonance (*Saṁvaditva*) now forgotten. *Samvādī* definitely means the consonance of Fourth and Fifth, as we should say 'Perfect consonance' *Vādī* is the note to which it is so related. *Vivādī* is applied by Bharata to the semitone. He speaks (verse 24) of notes being *vivādī* to one another when they are at the distance of twenty *çrutis*. This is the same thing as two *çrutis* (22-20) which reading actually appears in another manuscript. *Anuvādī* is the name for 'all other relations which are not *vādī*, *samvādī* or *vivādī*. These three relations belong to the tetrachord, and presumably *anuvādī* does too. Current tradition makes *anuvādī* the major Third. But Bharata says 'all other' (*çesha*), as if more than one relationship was *anuvādī*. If it is possible to suppose that in the term *anuvādī* he included the major and minor tones (which together make up the major Third) all the determining elements of Bharata's scale would be accounted for.

Fox Strangways has a chapter on legend and history too. I shall quote the legends in which the same well-known names recur.

533 713 "Once upon a time the great anchorite Nārada thought within himself he had mastered the whole art and science of music. To curb his pride the all-knowing Vishnu took him to visit the abode of the gods. They entered a spacious building the inmates of which were numerous men and women, who were all weeping over their broken limbs. Vishnu stopped short and enquired of them the reason for their lamentation. They answered that they were the Rāgs, and Rāginis of music, created by Mahādeva; but as one anchorite of the name of Nārada, ignorant of the true knowledge of music and unskilful in performance, had sung them recklessly, their features were distorted and their limbs broken, and that unless Mahādeva or some other discreet and skilful person would sing them properly, there was slender hope of their ever being restored to their former state of body. Nārada, ashamed, kneeled down before Vishnu and asked to be forgiven."

"With Nārada, the R'shi who first 'heard' the laws of music, are associated Tumburu, the first singer, and Bharata, the first to draw up rules for the drama, of which music formed a large part. Of Tumburu it is said that he increased the scale in which the *Sāmaveda* was chanted from five notes to six or seven. The treatise which purports to record the doctrine of Nārada, the *Naradaçikshā* is probably of late date (1000 A D. ?) and gives no clue whatever to the achievement of the Nārada of legend. The treatise which bears the name of Bharata, the *Nāṭyaçastra*, is similarly an eponym. One or other of these three names appears probably in every book on music that has been written, and the existence of the authors is held, though in complete absence of any specific doctrine attributed to them, as a pious belief.."

534 713 Among the Burmans the instrument of Guttila of the famous legend is a harp. Apparently it is a *vīnā*, according to Fox Strangways, "To the *vīnā*, the national instrument, there are so many references both direct and allusive, that it is difficult to choose. Perhaps one story, from the Jatakas, will be enough:

3: Khin Zaw I-5 (no date) 1940 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

BURMESE MUSIC.

A feeble musician, Musila (ဗန္ဓိလ) of Ujjeni, whose music on the *vina* was 'like scratching on a mat,' came to learn of Guttila (ဂုတ္တိလ) of Benares (the Bodhisatta). Guttila's parents when they heard him said "Shoo! Shoo! the rats are gnawing the *vina* to pieces'. Guttila who, as Bodhisatta, was 'skilled in discerning from the lineaments of the body' said 'Go my son, this art is not for you.' But Musila got his way; and Guttila, the Bodhisatta who did not stint his knowledge, at last pronounced his pupil perfect. Musila pressed to be taken into the king's service. This was done; but the king awarded Guttila twice as much as his pupil. Musila protested, and forced matters to a contest, of which proclamation was made to tuck of drum. The Bodhisatta reflected that he was old, and that 'if he beats me, death in the wood is better than the shame which will be my portion.' So to the woods he went, but 'kept returning through fear of death, and going back to the wood for fear of shame,' so that 'the grass died as he walked and his feet wore away a path.' In his trouble Sakka, the king of gods, appeared. Guttila was to break, in the contest, one string after another, beginning at the 'beestring' and the music should be as good as before. 'Then you shall go on playing with nothing but the body; and from the ends of the broken strings the sound shall go forth and fill all the land of Benares for the space of twelve leagues.' All happened as was foretold, and the scholar, beaten out of the field, was stoned and torn in pieces by the populace..."

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So far the classics: Yet it appears that in the music itself there is as much evidence (if not more) of Chinese and Siamese influence as there is of ancient Indian influence in literature. I hope these influences will receive the attention of researchers in Burmese history.

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As far as I am aware the Chinese influence seems to be the oldest. An unspoilt Burmese ear will catch Chinese cadences in any extemporization on the black keys of the piano in the truly old Burmese style. But that is no evidence. I quote J. Kunst[1].

"....This being granted, Prof. von Hornbostel has made a very important discovery, that the scales of very different civilisations and peoples are derived from this ancient Chinese cycle of blown fifths. All these scales are composed of a series of notes, ordinarily 5 or 7, which follow each other in the cycle in some kind of regular fashion.

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1. *De l'Origine des Echelles Musicales Jawano-Balinaises.* Conference faite le 7 Janvier 1928 a l'Institut Colonial d'Amsterdam. *In* Journal of the Siam Society, Vol. XXIII, pt., pp. 115-116. Translated by G.

[114]

342 MAHA-GIRI, is found in nearly every house (a junior member of a
776 family need revere only the symbol of the senior member of a family).
782 A dried coconut with attachment stems is placed in a basket, the top wrapped with a KAUNG-BONG (Head-wrap) of red and white cloth streamers and the basket hung on a nail to the primary corner post of the house. It must be adjusted correctly, and periodically sprinkled with sandlewood water. An interesting story explains the use of the coconut symbol.

●773 MAUNG TIN DE, a blacksmith of great powers had two beautiful sisters who he feared would be coveted by the king of the city in which they lived. He asked them for this reason to remain in seclusion. One day he returned from work to find them gone. He became very angry and pounded his anvil till the city shook and the people suffered from earache. For a while he eluded persuit but was finally caught and burned to death. Afterwards he became a powerful nat called MIN MAHA-GIRI with powers of protecting households. Since the coconut signifies coolness and thirst-quenching it came to be offered to the nat who had died from fire.

MIN MAHA-GIRI is consulted if sickness or other misfortunes visit the family. At such times the head of the family checks the coconut offering to make sure it is in good condition. If not this is remedied for much misfortune could be the result of MIN MAHA-GIRI's displeasure at being neglected. When a journey is contemplated he is also appealed to for protection. A lesser nat YON GIN O is in charge of the kitchen and more specifically the hearth. Ko Maung Than knew little of this [563] nat since it is of minor importance or not considered in Mon households.

342 The home is very important as a place for socio-religious functions
[788] many ceremonies involving groups of people are observed or in part
[574] take place in the house (see below in socio-religious section). Social visiting is also common and much enjoyed. Hospitality, related to but differentiated from charity, gains merit for the host. There is a saying that visitors "come only when the home is pleasant."

512 The home, of course, performs a major "function" as a sleeping
805 place, and there are many beleifs and observances in connection with
513 sleep. The evening hours are divided into LU NYAT THET SEIK (children

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The Buddhas are, of course, above earthly contacts and their helpers the THAM DEVA (heavenly-nats) function only as judges in the after-world - although they may counsel the living, as a "conscience", on right living. The MEYA-DEVA (earth-nats) on the other hand are major forces of this world. There are 37 major nats each with a characteristic appearance (in human form) and personality. Each has an origin legend involving a story of a human of extraordinary characteristics who met death in an unusual fashion and remained on earth to complicate men's affairs. Most have properties of guardian spirits who if their needs are attended to will protect the interests of a community or special group mainly by refraining from doing harm.

●[773]

21: Htin Aung
773, 779

AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

[For folk mythology and Buddhist mythology and for incidents and characters therefrom in Burmese literature and drama, see category 116, pp. 1-149.]

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1957 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

2. Folk Feasts and Spirit Dances

According to legend, the Sanskrit drama was created in the Silver Age to cheer up the people, who were no longer happy as they were in the Golden Age; the Japanese drama was first used by the gods to beguile the sun-goddess to reappear; and the Chinese drama came into being as the result of the Emperor Yuen Tsaung ordering, in the eighth century after Christ, a group of children to be trained to sing the various deeds of the great national heroes before his consort, in appreciation of her love for him.[1] The Burmese, however, have no such legends, and the origins of their drama were in the religious *Nibbathkin*. But before considering those Burmese miracle plays, perhaps it will not be out of place to give an account of the various folk feasts and spirit dances, which have in them elements essentially dramatic, and which gave some idea of the dramatic to the people and paved a way for the coming of the religious pageants and plays.

Folk feasts can be divided into two classes, those directly connected with Buddhism and those which are not. The Buddhist feasts occur on fixed dates and are celebrated all over the country. Of those, two are especially interesting, the feast of the Full Moon of the month of Tazaungmôn (which occurs in November) and the feast of the New Year (in April). Though the Full Moon of Tazaungmôn is an important Buddhist festival now, it is extremely probable that it was an important feast-day even before the introduction of Buddhism.[2] Special celebrations connected with the date have two distinct elements, the element of mimicry and the element of foolery. On that day, in the villages men dress themselves as animals, wearing appropriate masks, and dance through the village. The animal most commonly imitated is a sort of unicorn known to myth only. The desire to mimic animals probably came before the desire to mimic spirits, and I think the mimicry of animals, such as that we see in these celebrations, was the earliest attempt at the dramatic by the Burmese. Probably the mimicry of animals by men resulted in the presentation of animal puppet shows. In a Burmese puppet show, before the play begins, different animals come out one by

[1] A. B. Keith, *The Sanskrit Drama*; F. A. Lombard, *Japanese Drama*; A. E. Zucker, *Chinese Theatre*.

[2] Some Buddhist festivals in Burma probably are of pre-Buddhist origins (cf. the English Christmas which has many elements derived from pre-Christian times). At least the special celebrations of Tazaungmôn described here are almost certainly pre-Buddhist.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

536* While the interlude was developing, the drama, another form of
178 entertainment, was also becoming rapidly popular. The *Hawsa* or the
773 dramatic reading and recital of a Birth Story in verse was becoming
538 the fashion. The *Hawsa* was in dialogue form, and the reciter changed his voice and used dramatic gestures. As I have said, one cannot be certain of many things regarding the interlude, but it seems exceedingly probable that the early interludes were not literary. The actors were unlettered, unpractised in verse composition and only knew the *Jataka* Birth Stories from translations. The *Hawsa*, on the other hand, was a literary work. It was in verse. The reciter was an accomplished verse-writer if not a poet, and when reciting pieces he himself had not written, he invariably put in additions and modifications. He knew Pali and therefore could read the *Jatakas* in the original. Whilst the actor was looked upon as nothing more than a beggar, the reciter was greatly respected. This will perhaps explain why the *Hawsa*, and not the interlude, has come down to us in writing.[1] With all the differences, however, the reciter and the actor were akin to each other, and both contributed much to the rise of the developed play, just as both the dramatic recitations of the epic *Ramayana*, and the open-air performances of its scenes contributed much to the rise of the developed Sanskrit play in India.

536* There is no special term for that entertainment which I have called the interlude. The name *Pya-zat*, which means a play, is vaguely applied to it in common with developed plays, but it is certain that the term came into use only about the time of U Kyin U to denote developed plays. Therefore, I have ventured to name it the interlude, partly because of its similarity to the English interlude, but mainly because it was given in the middle of, or at least subsidiary to, the main entertainment of dancing.

[175] The interlude and the *Hawsa* were at the height of their popularity in 1767 when Siam was conquered. The results of the conquest are considered in Chapter II.

4. Sir William Ridgeway's Theory of the Origins and Development of Burmese Drama

536* Sir William Ridgeway, in *The Dramas and Dramatic Dances of*
114 *Non-European Races*, considers that the dramas and dramatic dances of those races support his theory regarding Greek tragedy, that it arose

[1] Some specimens of the *Hawsa* are given in the *Anthology of Burmese Literature*.

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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[788]

81. SYMBOL OF MYINMO-DAUNG.

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of the Burman type is the one cast for the Shwe-Dagôn Payâ by the Emperor Sinbyu Shin in 1775, which weighs forty-one tons.

According to the Burman cosmogony the world consists of four great islands, North, South, East and West, surrounded by the ocean. Burma and the known countries are situated in the south island. In the centre of all rises Mount Meru (*Myinmo-daung*). This centre of the universe is symbolized by a conventional tower provided with niches or caverns for mythical inhabitants of every sort, *Nat*, *Zawdyi* (sorcerers), *Bilu* (ogres), monsters half human and half brute, and dragons (No. 392). The symbol of *Myinmo-daung*, made of bamboo, with paper and tinsel, is a feature of various festivals. In substantial masonry it is a frequent adjunct of the temples.

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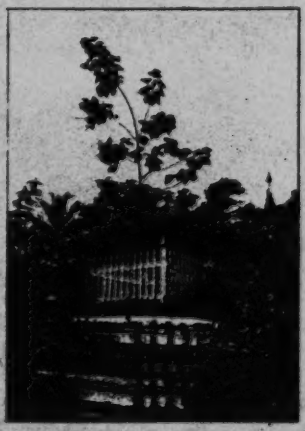
[773]

The *Bo* tree (*Bawdi-bin*), together with the rest of the *ficus* family, is sacred to the Hindu. The *Bo* is a variety of the *pipal* (*ficus religiosa*), a deciduous *ficus* with long copper-coloured acumina to the leaves. It is sacred to the Buddhists because it was while resting under the shade of a *Bo* tree at Gáya in Bahár, 600 years before Christ, that Gawdama realised the vanity of the ceremonial and ascetic systems, resisted temptation, and attained to supreme enlightenment, which, as Buddha, it became his mission to impart to mankind. "The *Bo* tree is to Buddhists what the Cross is to Christians" (Bigandet). The original *Mahâ-bodi* was piously tended while Buddhism flourished in India, and trees propagated from it were planted by Buddhist pilgrims. Such a tree is the historical *Bo* tree at Anurádhapúra in Ceylon, planted in 245 B.C. and still flourishing. Young plants cultivated from this tree are brought home to



82. BAWDI TREE.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
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Animism in Burma is usually termed Nat-worship. *Nat* has been compared with the Indian, *Natha*, but it is probably an indigenous term.[5] Strictly speaking, it should be distinguished from "disembodied spirit" or ghost, for which the Burmese name is *tasĕ*. The Burmese also speak of the "butterfly" soul in man, the *leip-bya*, which may leave the body even in life, during dream or unconsciousness.[6] "A *nat* is something quite different. The word is the equivalent of our word god, in the sense in which we speak of the gods of ancient Greece and Rome."[7] *Nat* legends, however, express the belief that most, if not all, of these godlings were once human beings. Thus the familiar household Nat, Min Magayi, was once a blacksmith, Maung Tin Dè, a man of such prodigious strength that whenever he struck his anvil the whole city was shaken, to the great wrath of the king who caused the blacksmith's death. His spirit continued to vex the neighbourhood until a temple was built in his honour.[8] In later times such spirits seem to have been elevated to *Nat* status by royal degree. Burmese tradition emphasises *the* Thirty Seven *Nats*, but the number has no special significance. Many *Nats* not included in the thirty seven are recognised today and some of the thirty seven ignored. Any attempt to denote the *Nat* realm too narrowly misrepresents what is, in fact, a fluctuating and ill defined situation. 'All is change' applies to this realm, in Burmese estimation, as much as to any other. Nor can we point to any one origin of the cultus. The Mondaing *Nat*, for example, may reflect a primitive Nature worship, since Mondaing signifies whirlwind, but local legend suggests another origin.[9] Some of the *Nats* are associated with Brahmanic and Buddhist legend. Others are definitely local and even recent. Sir George Scott, who was an acute observer, said that the Burman always distinguished the Spirits of Nature from the legendary gods imported from India.[10] On the other hand, there is a tendency to mingle Buddhist story and Nat story, and the Buddhist *peta*, as well as the *deva* is quite at home among the Burmese *Nats*.[11]

In earlier times, a victim was slain in order to provide a guardian spirit for a new town or building, and as late as the eleventh century a queen is said to have given her life for such a purpose. Buddhist teaching against taking life has gradually prevailed, however, against these harsher

[5] Cf. Bigandet, *Life of Gaudama* Vol. I, p. 17, Vol. II, p. 324 and Temple, *The Thirty Seven Nats*, p. 8.
[6] Cf. Forbes, *British Burma*, chap. IV, p. 99.
[7] R. Grant Brown, *The Pre-Buddhist Religion of the Burmese*, p. 6.
[8] R. Grant Brown, *ibid.*, p. 13.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[10] Temple, *ibid.*, p. 3.
[11] Cf. Bimala C. Law, *The Buddhist Conception of Spirits*.

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779* 775 It also modifies the sense of fatalism which might be derived from another conception, this time a Buddhist conception — the idea that a man's present character and situation are largely determined, according to inexorable moral law, by what he has done, and not done, in previous births. "As the wheel follows the draught ox, punishment follows sin."[60] Yet man is no fettered slave. Like other people the world over, the Burman vacillates between fatalism and the sense of his own power to help himself, between *Kan* and *Kutho*. On the whole, *Kutho* wins. "Merit weighs heavy, demerit light," says the Burmese proverb hopefully.

Pessimism, then, 'touched, strongly touched, with hope' – such is the Burmese religion. But what of the further qualification, 'touched with mysticism.'? We have seen that there may be an element of Nature mysticism. Can we go further and discern any sense of the sacred, any sense of religious dependence on higher power? In spite of the Nature mysticism and an occasional side glance in the direction of benevolent *Nats*, Burmese religion seems to be a religion of self-reliance, self-assurance and self-responsibility. A man 'must work out his own salvation.' Does this mean that there is nothing at all which corresponds to the Christian addition to the text — "with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you?"[61]

779* 775 782 Various efforts have been made to locate such a recognition. It is remarked that a pagoda in Prome is named "the image or pagoda where, if you pray, you will receive."[62] But the term, prayer, is used rather loosely by some present-day Buddhists. The monastery 'prayers' which we have cited could scarcely be termed prayers in any strict sense. Instances have been reported of simple villagers petitioning the Buddha for mercies, such as a child's recovery from sickness,[63] and I have myself seen women in attitiudes of prayer, with clasped hands and suppliant faces, before Gautama's image. Peasants recite the 'Song of Victory", celebrating the Buddha's triumphs over foes and tempters, as a 'mantra' to ward off evil.[64] Since a man may pray that his own *Kutho* may avail to help others, a natural sequence of thought may lead him to consider that the Buddha's *Kutho* may also avail, though some would say that the Buddha is lost in Nibbāna, far beyond this present existence. It is very questionable, however, if there is any sense of Divine Grace or prayer in the sense of communion with a Divine Being.

779* 773 The Buddha is certainly venerated. No account of Burmese Buddhism would be adequate without emphasising very definitely the central place he holds in the life and thought of the people. Popular Buddhism, as we

[60] *M.B.B.*, p. 45.
[61] *2 Philippians* 2: 12, 13.
[62] *M.B.B.*, p. 70.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[64] *M.B.B.*, p. 97.

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have seen, is a religion of story, and it is essentially the Buddha story, the life of Gautama, rehearsed, recited, pictured, dramatised, told and told again. 779* 773

"To hear of the Buddha from living lips in this country, which is full of his influence, where the spire of his monastery marks every village, and where every man has at one time or another been his monk, is quite a different thing to reading of him in far off countries.... To hear the yellow-robed monk tell of that life ... is a thing never to be forgotten. A sympathy comes to you from the circle of believers and you believe too.... And as they tell you the story of that great life, they bring it home to you with reflection and comment ... till you forget that he of whom they speak lived so long ago."[65]

Yet Burmese laymen, villagers or craftsmen, let alone monks, will flatly reject any suggestion that the Buddha was divine. Many of them, moreover, will explain their devotion very intelligently. They will make it abundantly clear that Gautama is venerated as a Socrates or a Moses might be venerated. No more. No less. His life was human, and in that very fact they see encouragement for others. [774]

It is not, then, to the conception of the Buddha that we must look for the religious ultimate of Southern Buddhism. Nor is it to the conception of the *Dhamma*, as some have suggested. A highly sophisticated intellectual might conceivably worship the 'Law within' but the Burmese Buddhist is seldom highly sophisticated, nor does he think of the Dhamma as the Law within: it is the Law without, expounded by the *Sangha*. 779* 775

It is elsewhere we must look for the recognition of the Divine. It may perhaps be contained in that looking forward to Nibbāna, which is the goal of all Buddhist aspiration. From what has thus far been remarked of the character of Burmese Buddhism, we can at least expect to find a positive, not a negative, conception of Nibbāna in this context.

Perhaps, too, Buddhism in Burma illustrates, in some degree, what may have been the original emphasis of the Buddha's teaching and the secret of his appeal. Perhaps it has retained or recovered something of that original vitality. 779*

Mrs Rhys Davids has suggested that the Buddha aroused response because he preached a gospel of hopeful Wayfaring from Good to Better, a caravan journey through the worlds, "a pilgrim's progress ... not so much with a load of sin to be discarded, as with an ever growing force of *arīha* — the good, the needed, the better."[66] He believed, with the seers of his time, that the Divine was immanent in man,[67] but he saw this

[65] Fielding Hall, *The Soul of a People*, chap. II, p. 18.
[66] *Sakya*, chap. VI, pp. 104 ff. [67] *Ibid.*, chap. IV, pp. 69 ff.

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CHAPTER IV

THE PARADOX OF BUDDHISM

1. "At the End of the World"

A certain monk indulged in philosophical speculations, though this was against the teaching of the Buddha. The monk wanted to know where the world ended. He therefore left the Buddha and set out on a journey through the skies, questioning the gods of the different heavens, one after another. He questioned the gods who are called the Servants of the Four Kings. "Where does the world end?" But they replied, "Ask the Four Kings." When he came to the Four Kings, however, they replied, "Ask the Thirty Three Gods."

Finally the monk came to the gods who are called the Servants of Brahmā.

"No," they replied to his question, "we ourselves do not know where the world ends. But ask Brahmā — the Great Brahmā, The Supreme One, the Mighty One, the All-seeing One, the Creator, the Father of all that are and are to be. He will know."

As they spoke, Brahmā himself appeared.

The monk put his question.

"I am the Great Brahmā," he answered, "the Supreme One, the Mighty One, the Father of all that are and are to be."

"I do not ask you, friend," said the monk, "whether you are indeed all that you now say. What I want to find out is where the world ends, where the four great elements cease, leaving no trace behind."

The great Brahmā hastily took the monk by the arm, and led him aside.

"Monk," he confessed, "I do not myself know where the world ends. But I did not want these gods who are my servants to hear me say so. Therefore I gave no answer in their presence. They think I know everything. But I do not know where the world ends. You had better go back to Buddha and ask him. Accept whatever answer he may give."[1]

We venture to extend this parable from the scriptures. We can imagine the monk explaining that the Buddha will not discuss such questions; he does not speak plainly enough about Nibbāna.

[1] D. i, 215ff. (cf Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part I, pp. 280ff.; cf. Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, p. 308).

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The poem therefore emphasises three lessons:

1. The honor due to the Buddha.
2. The blessing brought by the Buddha.
3. A challenge to the pupil to follow the Buddha's moral example.

The stanzas here quoted are from the version given by Purser and Saunders, M.B.B., pp. 99ff.

V.

THE NEMI ZAT

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Zat is the Burmese for Jātaka (Buddhist Birth Story). Of these the Nemi, Temi, Zeneka and Wethandaya Zats are especially popular, and form part of the Burmese child's education.

Reference has already been made in the text to the Wethanday Zat (Story of Prince Wessantara) which commends a prince who was willing to give away a kingdom, chariot, children and even his wife in his zeal for his own salvation.

The following is an extract from the Burmese version of the Nemi Zat given by Bishop Bigandet. As will be seen, it sets out the pains of hell and the blessings of heaven. The Burmese are not the only people who have considered such stories suitable to encourage young children in the right path!

The Buddha explains how he was, in a former existence, the ruler of the country of Mitila. As such, from a tender age he "displayed the most liberal and pious dispositions in making abundant alms and fervently observing all the religious practices. All the inhabitants of that kingdom followed his example.... During those happy times, hell seemed to have become quite unnecessary...

"On a certain day Nemi appeared to be most anxious to know which was the most excellent practice, the bestowing of alms, or the observance of the precepts." The King of the *Nat* realm himself came down from his glorious seat to give the answer, and, on his return, he eulogised King Nemi so strongly that the other *Nats* wished to see this virtuous prince. Accordingly a young *Nat*, named Matali, was commanded to escort the king to the *Nat* realm.

Stepping into the carriage sent for him, the king "abandoned himself to the guidance of his heavenly guide."

"Two roads are now opened before us," said Matali, "the one through the dismal dungeons, where the wicked are consigned to undergo punishment for their offences, and the other through the blissful seats, where the good are enjoying the rewards allotted to them for their virtues. Which of the two do you wish to follow?"

The prince said he wished to visit both places.

Matali answered in a mild tone of voice that his request should be complied with.

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The celestial guide directed his rapid course through the regions of desolation, where dwells an eternal horror. The first object they met with was a broad and deep river... glowing like a flame.... On the banks of that river stand the infernal ministers.... wounding, piercing the unfortunate wretches who try to get out of that horrible and burning water.....

"What are the crimes," asked the terrified prince, "that have committed the unfortunate inhabitants of this place to undergo such unheard-of sufferings?"

"They are," replied Matali, "the persecutors of the weak, the heartless oppressors of the poor etc."

At another hell, Matali explains, "These suffer for having done no good to their fellow-creatures, for preventing others to do some, and for having borne envy to their neighbours."

After visiting other hells and receiving similar explanations, "Nemi was suddenly brought over to the beautiful, smiling and blissful seats of the blessed. He soon descried the celebrated palace made of diamonds.... In that palace Biranee occupied a splendid apartment; she was then lying on a soft sofa, surrounded by more than a thousand beauties.

"What good works," asked Nemi, "has Biranee practised to deserve such a magnificent reward?"

Matali replied, "This daughter of *Nats* was formerly a slave in the house of a pounha. She was always very attentive to all the duties of her position, and at the same time regularly observed the precepts of the law. On a certain day her mistress, who was wont to feed eight Rahans (monks) daily, fell into a fit of anger, and said that she was unable to bear any longer the fatigue attending the maintenance of these religious. But the young slave, full of religious zeal, took upon herself the labour of feeding the Rahans. For this good and meritorious work she is enjoying the happiness of her present position."

After visiting other heavens and receiving other similar explanations, Nemi was introduced to the presence of the chief of the *Nats*.

On his return to his kigdom he told his people what he had seen "and concluded by exhorting his people to be liberal in bestowing alms, that they might hereafter be admitted to share in the enjoyment of the Nats' happiness.

---from Bishop Bigandet, *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 153ff.

(From the context it seems clear that the Bishop had not himself seen any copy of the Jatakas. He says that he has heard that there is such a book in Ceylon and makes a conjecture about its contents.)

NOTE C.

AN-ATTĀ DOCTRINE, NIBBĀNA AND INDIVIDUAL SURVIVAL

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The Buddhist denial of the soul or ego seems to the average non-Buddhist inconsistent with the belief in individual survival after death which belief in Nibbāna seems to imply. But intelligent Buddhists are equally bewilder-

671 molded the native customary laws in the other regions of
177 Southeast Asia, and the great Hindu Code of Manu, the hermit, the sage, the lawgiver, had gained enormous prestige and authority in Southeast Asia. The Burmese scholars and lawyers of the eleventh century studied the Code of Manu, but found
[565] little in it to interest them. The rigid caste system, which served as the basis of Hindu law as embodied in the Code of Manu, made no appeal to the Burmese with their classless society. The Burmese never had an aristocracy or a middle class. The king was above others, but others were all equal. There was no hereditary nobility, and the Burmese have always been so individualistic that family names or surnames have never existed with the Burmese. The officers of the king could be said to have formed a nobility, but if that was so, it was a nobility into which every Burmese could enter by talent and personality alone. The king, the chieftain, and the headman were originally elected. Thus the idea of dividing society into classes distinguished only by birth seemed strange to the Burmese.

671 Nonetheless, the prestige of the Code of Manu was so high
773 in Southeast Asia that the Burmese decided to make Manu their mythical law-giver. In Hindu mythology, Manu was a hermit, divinely inspired. In Burmese legend, Manu became a simple cowherd who was later elected king because of his mastery of customary law. The Burmese Manu also became a hermit later, but he became a hermit out of remorse because he once gave a wrong decision. This wrong judgment of the great Manu is well known in Burmese folklore as the case of the small cucumber. There was a cucumber plant growing in a man's garden, but as it was a creeper, it grew across the dividing hedge and bore fruit in the neighbor's garden. Now the man and the neighbor quarreled as to who was entitled to the small cucumber fruit, and they took their case before the great Manu, who decided in favor of the neighbor. But he soon reversed his decision, and feeling remorseful over his previous judgment, became a hermit. This clearly

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illustrates that with the Burmese, Manu had become only an ordinary human being with the human trait of making mistakes, so very different from the divine hermit of Hindu lore.

By the thirteenth century, the customary law of the Burmese came to be collected and written down by jurists and scholars. Throughout the intervening centuries until the British conquest of the country, such collections of the law, and also collections of judicial precedents were made from time to time by scholars and jurists. But those collections were not codes, and were not fully binding on the judges. In all these collections, Manu was mentioned as the law-giver, and this lip-service paid to the prestige of the Hindu Code of Manu has misled modern scholars, especially European scholars of Burmese history and Burmese law, into thinking that the Burmese law was merely the Hindu Code of Manu modified and transplanted almost overnight in Burma of the eleventh century.

But in the eleventh century, the Burmese did become Buddhists almost overnight. The Burmese took to Buddhism with great enthusiasm, because the way of life preached by the Buddha seemed to be identical with their own democratic way of life. The Buddhistic revolt against the rigid caste system of the Hindu society could be appreciated by the Burmese, who called the Hindu half-playfully and half-seriously, "kula" or "caste people," and the Buddhistic emphasis on the equality of all men appealed to the Burmese with their classless society and their own emphasis on individual freedom. The jurists and the scholars waxed enthusiastic over Buddhism, and they gave a Buddhistic coloring and a Buddhistic background to their collections of Burmese customary law. This misled the early British administrators and judges in Burma into thinking that Burmese customary law was Buddhistic in origin, and gave to it the misleading official name of "Burmese Buddhist Law."

The impact of the English legal system introduced into

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671 her own choice. The head of the Burmese family can also give
593 away children under the age of puberty or majority to another
597 family for adoption, but when the child attains the age of puberty or majority, he or she has the option to choose in which family (i.e. his original family or his adoptive family) he
671 will remain. Acquisitions by members of the family accrue
593 to the family, but as in Roman and Hindu laws, certain classes
428 of acquisition by members of the family accrue to the acquirer and not to the family. Gifts from grandparents, from the king, and in certain cases, from strangers, and earnings through exercise of skill in the arts and in astrology, medicine, advocacy, and alchemy accrue to the acquirer. When a member of the family wishes to leave the family, there is no necessity to gain the assistance of a court of law. By mutual consent among the members, he is permitted to leave and he is given his share of the family estate. When the whole family decides to break up also, no formality is required, and by general consent, the family estate is divided between the members according to the rules of law pertaining to the partition of an estate into various shares.

671 One of the main features of Burmese society is the high
562 status of its women. Unlike the situation in Hindu or Chinese society, the Burmese woman has never been a mere chattel at the disposal of the Burmese man. Since prehistoric times Burmese women have enjoyed an equality of status, rank, and opportunity with men. Under the Burmese kings, the women held high office, and served often as headman, chief-
[773] tainess, and queen. In Burmese folktales dealing with strange disputes and wonderful decisions, which are known as Juristic Tales, the judge is a woman, namely Princess Learned-in-the-Law. At the present day, all the learned professions are open to women, and approximately 25 per cent of the students at the University of Rangoon are women.

671 The high status of women in Burmese society is reflected
583 in the Burmese customary law relating to marriage, divorce,
586 and inheritance. In Burmese law, marriage is purely a civil
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